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MYSTICAL REFLECTION OF MUSIC ON PERSONALITY AND BEHAVIOUR – THE PROVIDENTIAL IMPACT OF ENATIC (MATERNAL) MUSIC

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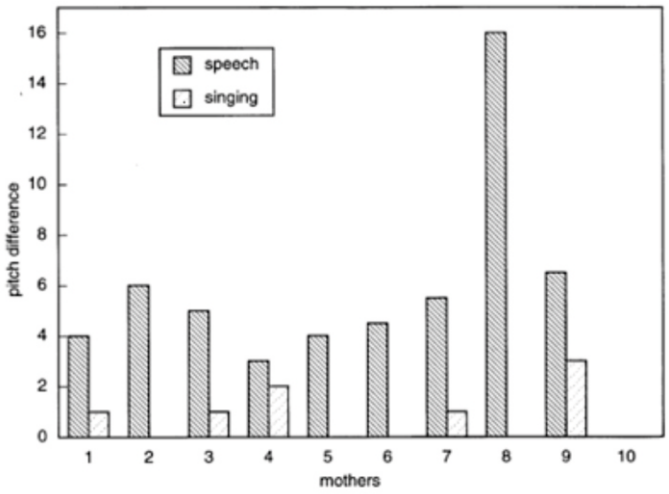
ABSTRACT

Mothers uses special purpose repertoire consisting of lullabies and play songs to sing to their infants. Mother's usual style of singing differs when singing to their babies marked by the virtues of expressive voice quality, emotive quality, higher pitch slower tempo etc. Specifically their pitch level is higher and articulations of words are more blurred for infant than for preschool audiences. These features of care giving style are also evident in fathers' singing to infants and in preschoolers singing to their infant siblings. However, 'structural simplicity or repetitiveness seems to be the principle cue that guides identification'.

During the experimental research we observed that – 'When mother sings to her infant than her singing pitch is lower to that of the pitch of speech i.e: "women's singing tends to be higher-pitched than their speech, but speech to infants is higher pitched than singing to infants. This situation results from the large increase in pitch level say for instance three to four semitones; for infant-directed speech coupled with the small increase (one semitone) for infant-directed singing". With the help of clustered columns, we have graphed out the pitch difference of songs and verbal phrases by 10 mothers. These verbal songs and phrases were repetition separated by one week or more.



6-Fig.61

There is considerable variation in maternal singing, but with surprising stability. When mothers sing the same song to their infant on two occasions separated by a week or more, their pitch level differs and their tempo (in beats per minute) differs by only 3%. Such pitch and tempo variations are smaller than those reported for adults' repeated renditions of pop or folk songs. Mothers' repetition of identical verbal phrases across the same period shows considerably greater variability in pitch and tempo. If the act of singing affects mothers' mood or state that might account, in part, for the stability of pitch and tempo over extended periods—a possible consequence of state-dependent memory. Frequent singing to infants may also implicate motor memory. In any event, mothers' performances of songs seem to become ritualized, which may facilitate their use as communicative signals to paralinguistic infants, (see above graph).

"In a recent investigation it has been shown that six-month-old infants furnished saliva samples before and after mothers sang to them for 10 minutes. Changes in salivary cortisol from pre- to post test levels were highly but inversely correlated with pre-test levels. Specifically, infants with initially lower levels of salivary cortisol showed cortisol increases, but those with initially higher levels showed decreases. The arousal-modulating effect of maternal singing was also reflected in reduced variance from pre- to post test levels. These findings are impressive, given the narrow range of initial cortisol levels and the absence of stressful circumstances" – "(SHENFIELD, T. & S.E. TREHUB. 2000. Infants' response to maternal singing. Poster presented at the biennial meeting of the International Conference on Infant Studies. Brighton, UK. July)".

Conclusion:

Psychological and Physiological Significance of Singing to Infants

"Mothers' tendency or propensity to sing to infants and the impact of their singing on infant attention and arousal raise the possibility that maternal singing could have enhanced infant survival in difficult ancestral conditions. Children's extended period of helplessness would have created intense selection pressures for parental commitment, including pressures for infant displays to sustain such commitment. It is likely that singing to infants promotes reciprocal emotional ties, just as singing in other circumstances reduces the psychological distance between singer and listeners. Presumably, mother's growing attachment to infants would lead them to generate increasingly expressive performances. To balance the enormous physical and psychological costs of parenting, infant recipients of such largesse would have to advertise their worth. Falling asleep to lullabies or entering trance-like states to performances of other songs might qualify in this respect. In general, favourable consequences of maternal singing on infant arousal, whether through cry reduction, sleep induction, or positive effect, would contribute to infant well-being while promoting the continuation of such maternal behavior. The healthy and contented offspring of singing mothers would be more likely to pass on their genes than would the offspring of non- singing mothers" – "(SANDRA E. TREHUB. "Musical Predispositions in Infancy", Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, 01/25/2006)".

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